

**Amendments to the Claims:**

*This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:*

1. (Original) A catalytic composition comprising a catalyst effective for catalysing asymmetric hydrogenation reactions, which catalyst requires acid activation, an acidic material effective for activating the catalyst, and a buffering compound or composition capable of forming, in the presence of the acidic material, an acetal, a ketal, a hemiacetal, and/or a hemiketal.
2. (Original) A catalytic composition according to claim 1, wherein the catalyst is a BINAP or other biaryl bisphosphine-based ligand catalyst.
3. (Currently Amended) A catalytic composition according to claim 1 ~~or claim 2~~, wherein the catalyst is effective for catalysing the enantioselective hydrogenation of p-ketoesters.
4. (Currently Amended) A catalytic composition according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, wherein the acidic material comprises a substrate suitable for asymmetric hydrogenation assisted by the catalyst.
5. (Original) A catalytic composition according to claim 4, wherein the substrate is ethyl-4-chloroacetoacetate.
6. (Currently Amended) A catalytic composition according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, wherein the buffering compound or composition comprises acetone and methanol.

7. (Currently Amended) A catalytic composition according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, wherein the buffering compound or composition is suitable for use as a solvent or solvent system in an asymmetric hydrogenation reaction carried out in the presence of the catalytic composition.

8. (Original) A process for the enantioselective catalytic hydrogenation of a hydrogenatable substrate comprising contacting the substrate with hydrogen and with a catalyst effective for enantioselective hydrogenation of the substrate, which catalyst requires acid activation, in the presence of an acidic material and a buffering compound or composition capable of forming, in the presence of the acidic material, an acetal, a ketal, a hemiacetal, and/or a hemiketal, under conditions effective for enantioselective hydrogenation of the substrate.

9. (Original) A process according to claim 8, wherein the catalyst is a BINAP or other diarylbisphosphine-based ligand catalyst.

10. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 9 ~~or claim 10~~, wherein the catalyst is effective for catalysing the enantioselective hydrogenation of P-ketoesters.

11. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~any one of claims 8 to 10~~ claim 8, wherein the acidic material comprises a substrate suitable for asymmetric hydrogenation assisted by the catalyst.

12. (Original) A process according to claim 11, wherein the substrate is ethyl-4-chloroacetoacetate.

13. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~any one of claims 8 to 12~~ claim 8, wherein the buffering compound or composition comprises acetone and methanol.

14. (Currently amended) A process according to ~~any one of claims 8 to 13~~ claim 8, wherein the buffering compound or composition is suitable for use as a solvent or solvent system in the asymmetric hydrogenation reaction.

15. (Currently Amended) ~~Use of a buffering compound or composition in a~~ process for the asymmetric catalytic hydrogenation of a substrate in the presence of an effective catalyst requiring acid activation, and of an acidic material for effecting such activation comprising the step of using a buffering compound or composition, which buffering compound or composition has the capacity to form an acetal, a ketal, a hemiacetal, and/or a hemiketal in the presence of the acidic material, to improve the enantiomeric excess of desired asymmetrically hydrogenated product.